

# REGIONAL EDITION

UNITED KINGDOM | IRELAND

## Editorial

Dear Readers,

This final issue of the year opens with a message from Mr Dominique Paravicini, who took up his post as the new Ambassador of Switzerland to the United Kingdom in August. His first visits across the country underline the close ties between Switzerland and the UK – ties also reflected in the many activities of our Swiss clubs and associations.

We also report on the Embassy of Switzerland in Ireland's recent initiatives promoting democratic dialogue, and share an important contribution on the challenges sur-

rounding the UK's digital immigration system, encouraging Swiss citizens abroad to keep their MPs informed.

Across the regions, this edition showcases a season of community life: the Unione Ticinese London's autumn events, gatherings in Manchester and Edinburgh, and celebrations in the Swiss Church in London, in the Wales, the Southwest and the Southern Area Swiss Club. From cultural evenings to remembrance visits and festive meals, these activities highlight the strength and continuity of Swiss community spirit abroad.

Warm festive wishes and a Happy New Year!



GIOIA PALMIERI,  
«UK & IRELAND PAGES»

## Swiss Embassy in London:

### Welcome message from Ambassador Dominique Paravicini

It is a great pleasure to introduce myself as the new Ambassador of Switzerland to the United Kingdom.

My wife Fabienne and I are delighted to be here. It is a true privilege to be Ambassador and to represent, alongside the rest of the

Embassy team, the interests of Switzerland and our citizens in the UK.

I arrive in London following diplomatic postings in Bern, Ankara, Rome, Paris and Geneva. Most recently, I was appointed Trade Delegate of the Federal Council

heading the Economic Cooperation Division at the State Secretariat for Economic Cooperation (SECO). Part of this role involved representing Switzerland at the World Bank and regional development banks including the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, based in London.

I have kicked off my posting here with official visits to Lancashire and Scotland. I am excited to see the impact of Switzerland – and Swiss citizens – across the UK. You all play a key role in promoting cultural exchanges and contributing towards the enduring friendship between our two countries

With my best wishes,  
**Dominique Paravicini**  
Ambassador of Switzerland  
to the United Kingdom



## Dialogue for democracy: Switzerland highlights its commitment in Ireland

Amid global democratic backsliding, Switzerland remains committed to upholding and promoting democratic values. The Embassy of Switzerland in Ireland reaffirmed this commitment through two recent events.

In partnership with the Institute of International and European Affairs, the Embassy hosted a panel discussion on enhancing mutual understanding of different democratic systems and exploring effective ways to strengthen democracy today. Experts discussed models such as direct and deliberative democracy, highlighting Switzerland's referendum practice and Ireland's Citizens Assemblies. At a second event, Professor Daniel Kübler from the University of Zurich gave a lecture at University College Dublin on the role of referendums in Switzerland's political system and their relevance for modern governance.

Together, these initiatives underscore the enduring importance of democratic dialogue and Switzerland's continued engagement in promoting inclusive and resilient democratic societies.

SWISS EMBASSY DUBLIN



Prof. Daniel Kübler at University College Dublin.

## eVisa vulnerability: Swiss Abroad urged to raise concerns with MPs

On 28 October, I attended a Parliamentary roundtable sponsored by Pete Wishart MP and organised by the3million. It was deeply moving, and at times shocking, to hear Mark and Shingai share their ordeal in obtaining the Settled Status. I was also alarmed by the growing number of vulnerable clients that Emily and Helen from the North East Law Centre are supporting daily, many of whom struggle with an online immigration system that is difficult to navigate and often unreliable.

Over 10 million people in the UK, including Swiss citizens abroad, must rely on eVisas to prove their rights. When the system fails, simple computer errors can result in lives being put on hold, lost job opportunities, and denial of access to essential public services.

While some may have once dismissed these issues as teething problems of a new system, the current anti-immigration rhetoric and uncertainty surrounding government policy have increased anxiety among many lawful residents. People are asking a crucial question: **will we still be protected if we have no physical proof of our right to live in the UK?**

The key takeaway from this session was clear, we must inform the MPs about these ongoing problems. Many are still unaware of the scale of digital system failures and the fear they cause among migrants and foreign nationals. The more people reach out to their representatives, the stronger the case will be for a Parliamentary review and reform of the system. I therefore urge our Swiss Abroad in the UK to contact their MP and express their concerns and fears.



Roundtable at Parliament House hosted by Pete Wishart MP and the3million.

I would like to thank Pete Wishart MP for hosting this important roundtable, and Rachel Blake MP, Rebecca Long Bailey MP, Sojan Joseph MP, Dame Chi Onwurah MP, Jessica Toale MP, and Amanda Martin MP for attending. Finally, I wish to thank my local MP, Neil Duncan-Jordan, for supporting Early Day Motion 1279, which calls for an independent review of the Home Office's digital immigration status policy.

Please feel free to contact me if you would like to discuss any concerns you may have on this matter.

**Loredana Guetg-Wyatt**

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Annual UT graves visit at East Finchley Cemetery.



Students awarded the 2024/25 UT bursaries.

## Autumn gatherings: Highlights from three months of UT London events

Over the past three months, the Unione Ticinese London has brought together students, long-standing members, and friends for a series of events celebrating community, culture and tradition.

The season opened on 8 October with the annual Welcome Evening, where Jérémie Bron and Consul Laurent Vuillemez outlined Switzerland's diplomatic and consular support for citizens abroad. Students awarded the 2024/25 UT bursaries presented projects ranging from music production and theatre to sustainable plastics, generative AI and migratory literature. A workshop, updates on UT activities, and a reception welcomed a new cohort of Ticinese students pursuing studies across disciplines from mathematics and computational finance to fashion and dance.

On 18 October, more than 60 guests joined the traditional Castagnata at the Embassy of Switzerland, enjoying pumpkin soup, roasted chestnuts, a raffle and warm conversations.

Ambassador Dominique Paravicini met members and friends, and thanks went to the President of UTL Emilie Martignoni and Karin Lanini Arthofer, her team, and all volunteers and Embassy staff for their support.

A week later, on 26 October, members and friends gathered for the annual Visit to the UT Graves at East Finchley Cemetery. Light maintenance was carried out and cyclamens placed in remembrance of past members – a moment of reflection that held particular meaning for those with family connections to the historic UT plots.

The season concluded on 6 December with the UT & New Helvetic Society Christmas Concert at the Swiss Embassy. Featuring young Swiss musicians performing works by major Swiss composers, the evening ended with festive drinks and panettone – a warm closing to the year.

UNIONE TICINESE LONDON

INFO: [UTLONDON.ORG](http://UTLONDON.ORG)

## Swiss Club Manchester: A get-together on the eve of the 175<sup>th</sup> club's anniversary

Fountain House, Albert Square, was the venue for this long-awaited event on 6 November. The Victorian Memorial Hall provided a cosy corner and a fitting location for a drinks reception on the eve of the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Swiss Club Manchester.

This was the first event of its type for at least 50 years. There was a warm and friendly atmosphere as Swiss not known to each other met for the first time.

The event was jointly sponsored by the Swiss Consulate and the Swiss Club Manchester, and was supported by Honorary Consul Hans and Angela Scheiwiller, as well as Isabelle Schenk, UK delegate to the Swiss Abroad.

Future similar get-togethers will follow during 2026. If you would like to take part, please contact us at [info@swissclubmanchester.org.uk](mailto:info@swissclubmanchester.org.uk).

ARTHUR BROADHURST



Event supported by the Swiss Consulate and the OSA representative.

### Upcoming events:

#### New Year Lunch

on Sunday 25 January 2026  
at the Pinewood Hotel  
in Handforth

For information about taking part, please visit  
[swissclubmanchester.org.uk](http://swissclubmanchester.org.uk) or  
[info@swissclubmanchester.org.uk](mailto:info@swissclubmanchester.org.uk)



## Match night: Swiss women's team triumphs in Scotland

On 28 October, the Swiss women's national football team faced Scotland in a lively friendly match in Dunfermline, securing an exciting 4–3 victory on a crisp autumn evening. The game offered plenty of energy from both sides, with Switzerland ultimately taking the win in front of a supportive crowd.

Among those cheering from the stands were Ambassador Dominique Paravicini and Honorary Consul General Peter Müller-McDougall, proudly wearing their new Swiss scarves. Their attendance formed part of the Ambassador's wider official trip to Scotland, which included meetings at the Scottish Parliament with Cabinet Secretary Angus Robertson and discussions on Swiss-Scottish cultural and economic ties, as well as visits to the Edinburgh International Festival and Scotland's FinTech sector.

The Swiss team also enjoyed strong backing from a small group of committee members from the Swiss Club Edinburgh, who brought along a large Swiss flag to show their support. Their enthusiasm even caught the attention of the broadcasters: the group appeared briefly on the live stream as they waved the flag during one of Switzerland's goals.

A photo shared by the Swiss Embassy captures the spirit of the evening – a celebration of sport, community, and Swiss pride far from home.



Ambassador Paravicini and Honorary Consul General Müller-McDougall



A celebration of sport and community.

## Dinner tradition: A welcoming night for the Swiss Club Edinburgh

On 13 September 2025, 33 members of the Swiss Club Edinburgh gathered to celebrate their yearly Annual Dinner at Valvona & Crolla, an iconic Edinburgh institution on Leith Walk.

Whilst the weather outside was typically Scottish, the atmosphere inside was warm and welcoming. A complimentary drink and a delicious three-course dinner, served in the private back room of the Italian delicatessen, set the perfect scene for lively conversation and cheerful reunions among members.

President Franz Muheim gave a short speech, sharing updates on past and upcoming club events as well as news from the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad. The evening continued with an entertaining true-or-false quiz featuring surprising facts about Scotland and Switzerland, which was enthusiastically received and sparked animated discussions at all four tables.

Everyone left with full hearts, smiling faces, and a shared anticipation for next year's gathering in Edinburgh.

Info: [swissclubedinburgh.co.uk](http://swissclubedinburgh.co.uk)



Annual Dinner at Valvona & Crolla.



A quiz on surprising Scottish and Swiss facts was held.

## Thresholds: A Church as a 'versatile empty vessel'

In a quiet corner of Covent Garden, the Swiss Church stands as a place shaped less by doctrine than by openness. Its most symbolic feature is the door – always slightly ajar – expressing a willingness to hold space for belief, doubt, and difference in a post-faith era.

Founded in 1762 and rebuilt in its current neoclassical form in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Church has long adapted to changing times. From serving generations of Swiss migrants to navigating periods of decline, its strength has been its ability to stay receptive rather than fixed.

Today, this openness is expressed through a shift towards a more inclusive spiritual imagination. Venue Manager Therese Theurillat speaks of the exhaustion of searching for women's presence

in traditional narratives and the exclusion embedded in patriarchal language for the divine. She argues that generations have been taught to distrust their instincts, emotions, and bodies – looking outward for validation instead of inward for wisdom.

For Therese, feminism is a form of reintegration: a reclaiming of the inner authority that makes rigid religious power structures unnecessary. If individuals recognise their own sacred worth, control becomes irrelevant.

This perspective shapes the Church's everyday life. Therese describes the building as a 'versatile empty vessel', ready to hold whatever the community needs. The weekly breakfast for rough sleepers is where this vision becomes concrete: a warm, safe place offering

dignity and rest to those living precariously. Yet such openness requires courage. 'I've lived in a draft my whole life,' she says. 'Every now and then I open the door wide to let new thoughts flood in.'

In an age when certainty is scarce, the Swiss Church offers something quieter – the willingness to remain at the threshold and trust that spiritual life continues wherever the door remains open.

BY ANNAHITA BROOKS

WITH REFLECTIONS FROM THERESE THEURILLAT

### About the Contributors

**Annahita Brooks** is a research-based artist and Master's student in Theology, Bible, and the Arts. She volunteers at the Swiss Church, supporting marketing and the weekly breakfast.

**Therese Theurillat** is the Church's Venue Manager. Originally from Basel, she is also an actor and writer with a background in crisis management and feminist philosophy.

### Upcoming at the Swiss Church:

**Sunday 21 December 2025, 11am**

Christmas Service for all ages, with Community Choir  
Choir rehearsal: 14 December, 1pm

**Saturday 7 February 2026, 6:30pm**

Raclette Fundraising Soirée

A celebratory evening with the New Helvetic Society supporting the future of the Swiss Church.

For full event details: [swisschurchlondon.org.uk](https://swisschurchlondon.org.uk)  
Email: [info@swisschurchlondon.org.uk](mailto:info@swisschurchlondon.org.uk)

## The Fifth Switzerland puzzle: A portrait of a Young Swiss in the UK



As part of the Swiss Review's 'Fifth Switzerland' Puzzle – a project gathering short portraits from among the 800,000 Swiss living abroad – contributors answer a selection of questions and share a photo to help complete this global mosaic. If you would like to take part,

please write to [editor@swissreviewuk.co.uk](mailto:editor@swissreviewuk.co.uk). Here is one contribution from our Swiss community in the UK.

**James Woodham, 18, Geography student living in Ilkley, United Kingdom.**

*If your friends asked you to make them a typical Swiss meal, what would you cook?*

I would cook them 'Pastetli', as this is a meal that my family has always had on Christmas Eve, and so always makes me think of Switzerland.

*How do you build bridges with relatives in Switzerland?*

I go to Switzerland every year, and we often have large family gatherings. I am in contact with some of the younger generation on social media.

*Which song makes you think of home?*

'Us Mänsch' by Bligg always makes me think of Switzerland, as it was on the radio all of the time during my first Young Swiss Abroad camp – something that made me feel much more connected with Switzerland.

*Is it possible to have several homelands?*

Yes, I think it is. I feel at home both in the UK and in parts of Switzerland, and think that having several homelands helps to develop one's ideas of the world.

*What do you miss the most about Switzerland?*

I miss the landscapes the most, I always feel in awe wherever I am in the country.

For more portraits, visit the Fifth Switzerland Puzzle at [swisscommunity.org](https://swisscommunity.org).



## Swiss National Day London 2026: Preparations and plans underway

Preparations for the Swiss National Day London 2026 celebration are already well underway. The organising team has confirmed that next year's event will take place on Saturday, 1 August, once again at The Crypt on the Green in Farringdon.

Designed as a family-oriented gathering, the festivities will run from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.,

offering a welcoming afternoon for the Swiss community and friends in London.

The event committee will continue under the same leadership for another year with Margret Wachnicka, and a refreshed website – [www.snd-london.com](http://www.snd-london.com) – will go live in April 2026, providing updates and registration options. Attendees will be able to sign up via email at



Alberto Groff, Deputy Head of Mission with Margrit Wachnicka.



Next year's event will take place on Saturday, 1 August.

[snd.hello@outlook.com](mailto:snd.hello@outlook.com) or directly on the homepage to stay connected with news, programme details, and raffle prize announcements.

The organisers also noted a correction regarding SND coverage on the last Swiss Review (October 25): at the 31 July 2025 celebration, the official address was delivered not by Ambassador Markus Leitner – who had already left his post – but by Alberto Groff, Deputy Head of Mission at the Swiss Embassy in London, a role he took up in January 2025.

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**Swiss Club Manchester**

Celebrating 175 years of life and commitment to the Swiss community in the UK, we are looking for new members and fresh energy. We count on Swiss nationals and Swiss-lovers to help us continue our activities and keep the club vibrant. If you are interested, please visit our website: [www.swissclubmanchester.org.uk](http://www.swissclubmanchester.org.uk)

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To get informed about the latest from the Swiss clubs and community living in the UK and to get in touch with the UK OSA delegates, please visit the website [swiss-societies.co.uk](http://swiss-societies.co.uk) and FOSSUK's social media:

**f @ukswiss**  
**t @FOSSUK**



## 1: Wales – Community support for local Sea Cadets

The Swiss community in Wales is celebrating the success of its 2025 Garden Party, which raised an impressive £910.50. The funds were officially handed over on 3 October during the Harvest Festival Service at St Peter's Church in Little Newcastle, beautifully decorated for the occasion.

A team of 14 Sea Cadets from Fishguard attended the handover. The donation will support the development of a new windsurfing section, offering young people the chance to learn new skills and enjoy outdoor activities.

In a letter of thanks, Sub Lieutenant (SCC) Charlie Mustoe RNR, Officer in Charge of the Fishguard Sea Cadets, expressed deep appreciation on behalf of the Unit. He emphasised that the contribution will have 'a massive impact... for years to come', helping to move the Unit forward. The funds will be used to purchase a Windsurfing Pod Trailer, allowing for safe storage and transportation of equipment and significantly enhancing opportunities for the cadets. As a registered charity, the Sea Cadets rely heavily on grants and donations to provide the best possible experience for their young members.

Organisers of the Garden Party extended heartfelt thanks to all friends and supporters whose generosity made the fundraising success possible. Their continued commitment over 15 years has ensured that the Welsh Swiss National Day celebrations remain a cherished community tradition. Planning is already underway for the next event on 1 August 2026, and early bookings are welcome.

With best regards and wishing you all a Very Merry Christmas, a Happy, Healthy and a Prosperous 2026.

BEAT & ELISABETH, BWEHREN@BTINTERNET.COM

## 2: Southern Area Swiss Club – Gschwellti Afternoon

The Southern Area Swiss Club recently gathered for a convivial Gschwellti and Chäs afternoon at the Basingstoke Canal Centre in Mytchett. Members enjoyed a relaxed and friendly atmosphere, delicious food, and the club's traditional raffle. It was a warm and cheerful occasion enjoyed by all who attended.

The Club's Christmas Party, held on 6 December, brought members together once again at the Canal Centre for a festive celebration to round off the year.

Looking ahead, the first event of 2026 will be a Sunday lunch at Côte in Farnham on 1 February 2026.

Members are kindly asked to note a new contact email for Berni Curtress: [bcurtress@gmail.com](mailto:bcurtress@gmail.com) (the previous address remains active until February).

## 3: Swiss Club Southwest – Raclette Feast

The Swiss Club Southwest held its annual Raclette Feast on 4 December at the Butleigh Pavilion. Members and friends gathered for a warm and festive afternoon celebrating Advent and Samichlaus.

For further information about upcoming activities, please contact: [beat.neukomm@hotmail.com](mailto:beat.neukomm@hotmail.com).



The Harvest Festival Service at St Peter's Church.



Sub Lt Charlie Mustoe RNR offering thanks.



Gschwellti and Chäs afternoon.



Members enjoyed a relaxed and friendly atmosphere.



A warm and festive afternoon.



## Visual Arts: Christina Niederberger

### John Moores Painting Prize 2025

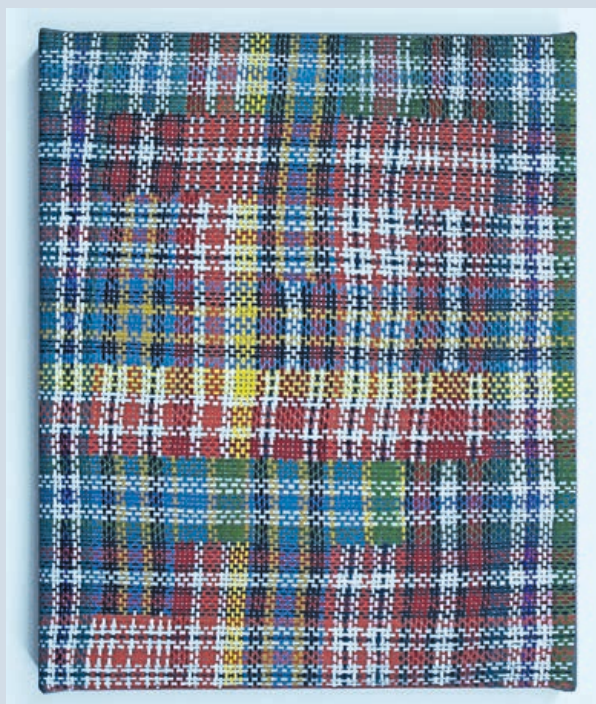
Swiss artist *Christina Niederberger* has been shortlisted for the prestigious *John Moores Painting Prize 2025* with her work *Agnes' Hanky*. Selected from more than 3,000 entries, her painting is currently on display as part of the biennial exhibition celebrating excellence in contemporary painting.

Visitor's Choice voting is open until 18 January 2026. The exhibition runs until 1 March 2026 at the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool.

More information:

[liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/walker-art-gallery](http://liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/walker-art-gallery)

Artist website: [www.niederberger-paint.ch](http://www.niederberger-paint.ch)



'Hot Spot (stand)', 2018 by Mona Hatoum © Jo Underhill

## Visual arts: Giacometti – Encounters

The Barbican Centre in London is presenting 'Encounters', a year-long series pairing iconic sculptures by Alberto Giacometti with new works by leading contemporary artists.

Organised in collaboration with the Fondation Giacometti, the programme explores how Giacometti's distinctive, elongated figures continue to inspire modern sculpture.

The series opened in 2025 with Huma Bhabha and continues with:

**Mona Hatoum** – until 11 January 2026

**Lynda Benglis** – 12 February to 31 May 2026

**Barbican Art Gallery, London EC2Y 8DS**

More info & tickets:

[barbican.org.uk/whats-on/2025/series/encounters-giacometti](http://barbican.org.uk/whats-on/2025/series/encounters-giacometti)



'Hot Spot (stand)' 2018 by Mona Hatoum © Jo Underhill.

### IMPRESSUM

HOW TO CONTACT THE EDITOR: Reports of Swiss society activities, news, coming events, correspondence, articles and advertising for the 'Switzerland in the UK & Ireland' section of the Swiss Review, should go to the editor:

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